

#### PROPOSED STATEWIDE TRAIL NETWORK



The Great Eastern Trail in Virginia



## The Proposed Trail System

The Great Eastern Trail (GET) is America's newest long-distance trail. It is an approximately 1,500-mile, long-distance trail from Alabama to New York. The GET in Northern Virginia comprises 207 miles, stretching from the southern boundary of Sleepy Creek Wildlife Management Area in West Virginia through Northern Virginia. It exits Virginia on Allegheny Mountain in the Warm Springs Ranger District of the George Washington National Forest, and continues into the Monongahela National Forest in West Virginia. After following the Allegheny Trail it returns to Virginia and connects with the Appalachian Trail (AT) on Peters Mountain, continuing along the Virginia-West Virginia boundary. The GET then has a gap of over 120 miles from the AT to Breaks Interstate Park, on the border with Virginia and West Virginia.

# THE GREAT EASTERN TRAIL

## America's Newest Long-Distance Trail

The Great Eastern Trail, stretches from Alabama to New York. With 327 miles, Virginia has more trail than any other state. The trail intersects three of America's eight National Scenic Trails, and provides a unique backcountry experience.

### GOALS

The GET is modeled after the Appalachian Trail – a premier wilderness experience for hikers and backpackers in the rugged mountains bordering Virginia and West Virginia. Although sponsored by hiking clubs up and down the Eastern Seaboard, much of the trail, especially in Virginia, will be multi-use. This will be a trail for all non-motorized users. It provides some spectacular vistas, not the least of which is Big Schloss, a rock formation on the Mill Mountain Trail in Northern Virginia.

### PARTNERS

The GET is a volunteer project being pursued by the Great Eastern Trail Association, a coalition of existing trail clubs dedicated to completion of the trail. It enjoys official sponsorship and assistance from the American Hiking Society and the National Park Service through the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program. Other partners include the Alabama Trails Association, Alabama Hiking Trail Society, Finger Lakes Trail Conference, Friends of Green Ridge State Forest, Georgia Pinhoti Trails Association, Mid State Trail Association, Pine Mountain Trail Conference, Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, Standing Stone Trail Association, Cumberland Trail Conference and the West Virginia Scenic Trails Association.

### BENEFITS

Like The Great Allegheny Passage, a 132-mile rail-turned-trail that has become a main thoroughfare for trail users seeking a wilder experience, the Great Eastern Trail will attract national and international visitors. The Passage generated over \$12 million in direct spending in 2007, up from \$7.3 million in 2002.

Towns all along the trail will serve as centers of commerce for trail users seeking food and other supplies. Like the trail town of Damascus in southwestern Virginia, some areas will be revitalized due to trail development. In Damascus, thirty-three new businesses have been developed due to the trails that converge in this former iron and timber town.



#### AUTHORITY LEGISLATION

Legislation passed in 1972 authorized DCR to establish and administer a state-wide system of non-motorized, scenic, recreational and connecting side trails.  
§ 10.1-204



The Great Eastern Trail



Big Schloss, a spectacular rock formation on the Mill Mountain Trail in Northern Virginia.

## Project Status – Accomplishments and Milestones

The Great Eastern Trail is a work in progress. Regionally, about 70 percent is finished, but in Virginia only about 50 percent is complete. Linking existing trails on Forest Service lands has provided most of the connected route. The large 120-mile gap in Southwest Virginia seriously affects the completion percentage in the state. There is also concern that some of the existing road walks should be re-routed to safer areas.

EXISTING TRAIL SEGMENTS	EXISTING TRAIL SEGMENTS	USERS		
		Hikers	Mountain Bicyclists	Horses
Tuscarora Trail (in VA)	57 mi.	•		
Mill Mountain Trail	5 mi.	•	•	•
Tibbett Knob Trail	2.4 mi.	•	•	•
Halfmoon Trail*	1.8 mi.	•	•	•
Bucktail Cutoff*	2.7 mi.	•	•	•
Bucktail Trail*	.4 mi.	•	•	•
Long Mountain Trail*	8.8 mi.	•	•	•
North Mountain Trail	13 mi.	•	•	•
Snyder Trail	1.3 mi.	•	•	•
Carr Mountain Trail (under development)	6 mi.	•		
Shenandoah Mt Trail	6.5 mi.	•	•	•
North River Trail	4 mi.	•	•	•
Tearjacket Trail	3.2 mi.	•	•	•
Shenandoah Mt Trail	7 mi.	•	•	•
Shenandoah Mt Trail	20.5 mi.	•	•	•
Benson Run Trail	1.75 mi.	•		•
Piney Mt Trail	1.5 mi.	•	•	•
Warm Springs Mt Trail	.5 mi.	•	•	•
Piney Mt Trail	2 mi.	•	•	•
Muddy Run Trail	1.2 mi.	•	•	•
Hidden Valley Trail	1.75 mi.	•		
Bogan Run Trail	5.5 mi.	•	•	•
Meadow Mt Trail	3.5 mi.	•	•	•

Please note: There are gaps or existing roads between many of these trails.

\*These trails are alternates to the main route on the Mill Mountain and Tibbett Knob trails, and hikers can elect to take this route in order to replenish water and to stay overnight at Trout Pond Recreation Area.

The Virginia portion of the Great Eastern Trail is one of five long distance trail networks that serve as the foundation in developing a statewide Virginia Trail Plan. Long range, Virginia's plan will strive for a commonwealth traversed by a system of multi-purpose trails linking Virginia's communities, open spaces and natural landscapes.